DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 168 164 EA 011 441

AUTHOR	Levis, Rae M.
TITLE	Potential Working Relationships Between ESA's and the R & D Exchange.
INSTITUTION	Wayne County Intermediate School District, Detroit, Mich.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	[79]
NOTE	83p.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational History; Elementary Secondary Education; Information Dissemination; Interagency Cooperation; Interagency Coordination; *Intermediate Administrative Units; *Research and Development Centers; Research Reviews (Publications); *School Districts; *State Departments of Education; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Research and Development Exchange

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the existing and potential roles of educational service agencies (ESAs) and their relationships with state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs). Special attention is focused on urban school districts. The paper also critically analyzes these roles and relationships as they relate to dissemination functions, with particular emphasis on the role of the ESA in the Research and Development Exchange (RDx). The history of the ESA is outlined, and studies of the education service agency in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other states are examined. These studies lead to specific recommendations regarding generally appropriate roles and functions. Roles and functions for the ESA in dissemination evolve from recent federal legislation focusing on research relative to educational change, broker/facilitator roles, nature of the educational enterprise, state and national dissemination agencies, and educational renewal and reform. A number of specific conclusions and recommendations relevant to the ESA and RDx are offered: no nationwide single-agency system or configuation for dissemination can adequately respond to all education needs; the professional community must support comprehensive research and development evaluation studies about regionalism; and the RDx configuration needs more client user input at all levels of planning, management, and stages of development. (Author/JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED168164

POTENTIAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

BETWEEN ESA'S AND

THE R & D EXCHANGE

*With some emphasis on ESA's which include large urban school districts in their service area.

Prepared by:

Rae M. Levis
Wayne County Intermediate School District

33500 Van Born Road
Wayne, Michigan 48184

EA 011 441

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	
Introduction	1
ESA Relationships	5
History	5
Benefits	7
Constraints	9
Roles & Functions	14
1. Present Status	14
2. Recommendations	20
Roles & Functions in Dissemination	26
Recent History	26
Present Status	33
Access	38
1. LEA	38
2. Large Urban Schools	41
3. SEA	44
ESA's and R & D Exchange	53
Educational apartheid	53
Need for continuing access	55
Barriers	58
Cost effectiveness	60
Recommendations	63
Appendix A	
Mandated & Permissive Responsibilities of Intermediate School Districts in Michigan	

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

The history of the educational service agency (ESA) movement in the United States provides some clues to its present diversity of structure and function. The historical emergence of the unit has also created specific educational benefits, among which are: 1) coordination of educational planning and systematic management at state, regional, and local levels; 2) contribution to equality of educational opportunity for all children; 3) articulation among the various segments of the state system of public education; 4) stimulation of educational change; 5) provision of comprehensive, readily-available, high quality supplemental services to local education agencies; 6) intermediary action between state and local education agencies for development of instructional programs to implement mandated legislation; 7) promotion of cooperation and educational exchange among urban, suburban and rural education agencies to bring about solutions to regional educational issues; 8) development and use of statewide networks; 9) increase in the utilization of educational principles to solve common problems in a cost effective way.

Constraints to the growth and effective functionaing of ESA's also exist. These constraints generally include: 1) external events such as inflation, collective bargaining, declining enrollment, and desegregation/integration issues; 2) underdeveloped and undeveloped political relationships; 3) power-sharing and ineffective communications; 4) lack of a well-developed system of assessing educational needs; 5) confusion about roles and functions.

ABSTRACT (CONTINUED)

Roles and functions of ESA's are seen as varied and generally responsive to state and local situations. Studies of the education service agency in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other states lead to specific recommendations regarding generally appropriate roles and functions.

Roles and functions for the ESA in dissemination evolve from recent federal legislation which has focused on research relative to educational change, broker/facilitator roles, nature of the educational enterprise, state and national dissemination agencies, and educational renewal and reform. These studies and reactions to them were instrumental in the planning and development of the NIE Research and Development Exchange (RDx). Specific roles of the ESA in dissemination are dependent upon its access to other educational communities.

The examination of existing roles and relationships of ESA's with other major units of school government and an analysis of these roles and relationships as they relate to dissemination functions lead to specific recommendations that appear to have relevance for the ESA and the RDx. These recommendations are:

1. No nationwide single-agency system or configuration for dissemination can adequately respond to all education needs and channel/manage the required resources.
2. The professional community must support comprehensive R & D and evaluation studies about regionalism.
3. The RDx configuration needs more client/user input at all levels of planning, management,

and stages of development.

4. The definition of ESA "linkers" and their role in dissemination relative to SEA's and constituent LEA's is needed along with similar explanations of relationships between SEA staff (the primary target of the Rx) and Rx personnel.
5. The RDx as currently constituted cannot respond directly to educational practitioners. Some means of identifying and training "linkers" at other levels or limiting clients to other providers of direct service to LEA's is needed.
6. The RDx should continue to build upon complementary or supportive activities with other agencies and networks.
7. The RDx should work with other agencies to develop processes for increasing the understanding and use of R & D outcomes to reflect practitioners' needs and improve their delivery of services.
8. The RDx should encourage the mounting of inter-disciplinary approaches to the solution of complex educational problems.
9. Limitation of the RDx contractors to response in the two priority areas of basic skills and competency-based education should be examined.
10. The RDx should remain flexible, continuing to monitor, redesign, and refine its activities in response to evaluation and feed forward information from its agreed-upon target audience(s). These

audiences may not be the same for each Rx since education is a state responsibility and state systems vary. The SEA should continue to be an intermediary to appropriate sub-state organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The task of establishing appropriate and effective working relationships among different units of educational government is complex. It has been complicated in the last decade as investigators have recognized the variety of roles and functions of each unit and reported the differences in the traditional and entitlement activities each unit claims as its service arena. During the same period of time, there has been a proliferation of educationally-related systems variously engaged in school improvement.[1] These well-intentioned organizations and groups have created further fractionization and fragmentation of the educational system. While coordination of services to improve student learning is certainly the goal of all governmental and peripherally-related educational units, the lack of clear understanding of the joint and separate functions of each has made the total system less responsive to client needs.

The major purpose of this paper is to examine the existing and potential roles and relationships of educational service agencies (ESA) with the other major units of school government.[2]

[1] Teacher centers, ERIC Clearinghouses, instructional materials and media centers, professional association programs, inservice training programs, career resource centers, work/education councils, school study councils, Regional Labs and Centers, community colleges.

[2] These are the state education agency (SEA) which has the legal obligation for the educational system and the local education agency (LEA) which has the responsibility for the actual operation of schools. Other actors in the educational arena will be described and defined as necessary.

A second purpose is to analyze critically these roles and relationships as they relate to dissemination functions, with particular emphasis on the role of the ESA in the Research & Development Exchange (R & D Exchange).[3] Special attention will also be focused on the dissemination and other service connections between an ESA and an urban school district when the latter is among the ESA constituents.

Definition of the ESA is necessary prior to role/function examinations. This middle-level unit was defined by the National Education Association in 1963 as "an agency that operates at a regional level, giving coordination and supplementary services to local school districts and serving as a link between these basic administrative units and the state education authority."[4] E. Robert Stephens has identified three basic forms: "A legally constituted unit of school government sitting between the state education agency and a collection of local school districts...; /a branch/ of the state education agency...; /and/ an educational cooperative /created/ by two or more local education agencies..."[5]

[3]The R & D Exchange is a dissemination network developed cooperatively by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and representatives from other educational sectors. It operates through certain Regional Laboratories (RBS, CEMREL, SEDL, NWREL, AEL, FWL, CVE) to bring educational research and development (R & D) results to practitioners and to transmit practitioner needs and concerns to individuals and agencies doing R & D.

[4]Rhodes, Alvin E., Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units, National Education Association of the United States, Department of Rural Education, 1963, pp. 3-4.

[5]E. Robert Stephens, Regionalism: Past, Present and Future, American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209, 1977, pp. 3-4.

A further refinement of the kinds of existing ESA's is to be found in a questionnaire developed by Stephens in 1978. This questionnaire identifies the same three basic types of units, but delineates the first a little more and indicates sub-divisions under the latter two. Thus, in the questionnaire, the first type of ESA is defined as a multi-service unit between the state education agency and a cluster of local education agencies established to provide services for both member LEA's and the SEA. Branches of the state education agency are subdivided by function into three groups: administrative only, service only, and administrative and service. Educational cooperatives are described as multi-purpose (having four or more services), limited purpose (not more than four services), and single purpose units.

ESA's in some combination of these forms exist today in at least thirty states. Major benefits are claimed, and a bright future is predicted for them. However, there are pitfalls to be avoided and strengths to be reinforced. These are to be addressed under ESA Relationships, Dissemination Functions, and ESA's and the R & D Exchange. Specific examples of activities in Michigan and in the Wayne County Intermediate School District[6]

[6]The Wayne County Intermediate School District is the largest ESA in Michigan and third largest in the nation. Its staff and executive officers are actively studying its roles and functions locally, regionally and nationally, are engaged in a variety of dissemination activities, and work in many ways with the school district of the City of Detroit, which is one of its thirty-six constituent school districts.

will be included as appropriate to illustrate particular points. Finally, functions of the units rather than structure will be emphasized since structure can actually be determined and altered by function.

ESA RELATIONSHIPS

ESA RELATIONSHIPS

History

The development of educational service agencies during the past decade has been impressive. Eleven states[7] currently have statewide networks of educational service agencies. Another three[8] have partial statewide systems; eleven have educational cooperatives;[9] two have strengthened county school systems;[10] and three have decentralized state education agencies.[11] This development has not been the result of a significant increase in the number of states adopting the three-level system, but rather an expansion and refinement of the services provided by an already existing middle echelon unit. This fact indicates that there are both stimulating and inhibiting factors affecting the growth of ESA's.

There are many recognized causes for the widespread interest in ESA's in the past decade. Some of these are interrelated and stem from the identification and proliferation of nationwide social issues that can be addressed from many educational levels. These issues have contributed to the growth of the middle-level units, creating some similarities in their structure and purpose.

[7]Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Washington.

[8]Colorado, Oregon, New York.

[9]Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Idaho, Wyoming.

[10]California, Ohio.

[11]Massachussetts, North Carolina, Kentucky.

Other causes stem from state and local concerns. These vary from state to state and school to school and tend to produce ESA's that serve diverse purposes, meet the needs of a variety of constituents, and respond to the challenge of changing local educational problems. ESA's are not yet static organizations; they are still evolving, developing mechanisms designed to facilitate the dual role of serving local education agencies and acting as an extension of the state education agency.

The diverse ESA's that have emerged in the past ten to fifteen years had common roots in the county school office. However, growth from these roots was irregular. During the decade of the 20's, the emergence of large local school districts which demanded and received autonomy, reduced county educational services primarily to rural areas. Improved roads and vehicles further eroded the realm of the county office. In the late 40's and early 50's the number of local education agencies had become so large that efficient administration and delivery of services was a problem. Merging of local districts, cooperatively sharing resources and services, and formation of specialized regional service centers were solutions. Those using these approaches borrowed some roles and functions from the county school office. Modification of these to fit particular organizational patterns has produced most of the existing relationships in the present three-echelon system.

Benefits

Research on the ESA is just beginning to emerge. Some descriptive studies dealing with the history of the unit exist, and some empirical studies of specific units and problems in various states have been conducted. Out of these sporadic studies have come some commonly-claimed benefits of the ESA, usually supported by the judgment of close observers. These listed benefits range from highly specific items such as provision of direct educational services to a specified population to broader generic advantages such as equalization of educational opportunity. The specific benefits can be derived from the following general ones:

1. ESA's can coordinate educational planning and systematic management in state, regional, and local settings. They have greater potential for developing local district involvement in planning and decision making beyond the realm of local jurisdiction.
2. ESA's can contribute to equality of educational opportunity for all children by minimizing financial, geographic and other barriers affecting access to available educational programs.
3. ESA's can maintain articulation among the various segments of the state system of public education, e.g., attendance accounting, financial accounting, school election routines.

4. ESA's can provide personnel who will act cooperatively with other professionals (SEA, university, other) to bring about appropriate educational change. This corps of professionals can work effectively with both local constituents and state consultants to assess, modify, and implement mandated and alternative programs.
5. ESA's can provide to local education agencies comprehensive, readily available, high quality supplemental services which have been mutually defined and agreed upon. These may include computer services for budget, financial reports, payroll, membership reports, student programming and assignments, instructional programs; cooperative purchasing programs; and psychological, social work, and speech correction services.
6. ESA's can serve as the planning agency for developing instructional programs to implement mandated educational legislation such as special education, career and vocational education, adult education, and professional development.
7. ESA's can promote cooperation and educational interchange among urban, suburban and rural education agencies to bring about solutions to regional educational issues.

8. ESA's can help bring about the development and use of appropriate statewide networks in such areas as dissemination, information storage and retrieval, evaluation, and research and development.
9. ESA's can promote cooperative ventures among local school districts to devise educationally-sound and cost-effective solutions to common problems.
10. ESA's can maintain a degree of flexibility in organization and delivery of services not possible at the state or local levels because of its intermediate status between legal responsibility and actual operation of schools. This flexibility allows for the diversity necessary for differing goals, immediate and comprehensive response to grass-roots needs, creative organizational relationships with other educational partners, and new patterns and techniques for problem-solving and shared decision-making.

Constraints

The fact that these claimed benefits are not in universal demand by potential clients suggests that there are constraints to the growth and effective functioning of ESA's, and the history of the organization and its present position reinforce this belief. An examination of the position of the intermediate

school district (ESA) in Michigan yields some clues about these constraints.

Diversity, listed as a claimed benefit, has been a deterrent to the growth and effective functioning of ESA's in Michigan. It has made the organization difficult to recognize and place in the educational hierarchy, has created comparisons with dissimilar educational units, has put the intermediate district in competition with established organizations such as universities, and has caused confusion about actual and potential roles and functions.

There have been "partnership" problems which have had a negative influence on growth. Partnership implies collaboration, cooperation, coordination, association, sharing, and equality. Established members of the system have not shown the same degree of readiness to accept a new partner. Therefore, the ESA has had to assume the responsibility for overcoming separation and social distance from organizations, agencies, and individuals as well as from programs. For example, ESA's in Michigan, as they developed and inherited roles and functions, tried to coordinate their activities with those of existing educational entities, such as the state education agency, local education agencies, universities, community colleges, municipal governments, and federally-created units such as regional labs and centers and CETA manpower offices. Personnel of Michigan ESA's have had to develop effective working relationships with individuals

and groups in these educational systems--the superintendents, members of boards of education and other policy groups, administrators, university personnel, state education agency consultants, teachers, specialists and support staff. They have had to learn to coordinate services across and within educational programs--special, general, vocational, career, adult, and bilingual education, and professional development. Effective collaboration in these areas has been hindered because of the following factors:

1. Lack of understanding about the roles and previous actions and activities of other organizations has created barriers in the decision-making process.
2. Rigid role expectations and separations among the groups and individuals in the educational system, which are carried into collaborative efforts, have caused confusion and competition among the parties involved.
3. Unwillingness of people with power to enter into collaborative endeavors has slowed changes in established and unilateral decision-making patterns.
4. Fear of loss of autonomy by constituents and other potential collaborating agencies has slowed acceptance of the ESA as a full educational partner.

These specific constraints can be broadened to some

generalities that have implications for the various existing types of ESA's.

1. Constraints like inflation, collective bargaining, declining enrollment, and desegregation/integration issues, which affect all of the members of the educational system, create greater problems for the ESA because of its emerging, evolving status. These conditions have further reduced dwindling resources for education.

2. There are undeveloped and underdeveloped political relationships that inhibit the growth and effective functioning of ESA's. These underutilized linkages include those with Congress, state legislative bodies, boards of education, county and municipal governmental bodies, university boards of regents, corporations, and community groups. ESA's function in a power-based system in which power-sharing evolves from mutual understanding of roles and functions.

3. Growth-inhibiting problems stemming from power sharing are directly related to insufficient or ineffective communications. With increased participation among the members of the educational system, communication structures have to be reshaped. ESA's will have to initiate and maintain communication networks within their service mandates,

among other units within a state, and between states if they are to overcome some of the constraints to their appropriate, effective development.

4. Many of the activities of ESA's are designed specifically to meet identified needs of constituent populations. These needs may be the result of federal/state mandates or of identified gaps in delivery systems. The lack of a well-developed system of assessing needs may create an ESA image as a non-responsive organization. Furthermore, a high level of trust and respect among the three directly-related levels of the system--state education agency, educational service agency, and local education agency--are necessary to effective needs assessment so that no link in the system is considered weak or compared unfavorably to another echelon because of lack of responsiveness to a need.
5. ESA's are the newest link in the established educational system. In some issues they are viewed as outsiders without a participatory part in the traditional system. There may be confusion about their function among the general public. Members of this group--the tax revolters, the school critics, the pressure reflectors, the unofficial contract negotiators--

usually do not understand the educational structure closest to them--the local education agency. They are thus very likely to misinterpret the role of the ESA. A constraint to growth and effective operation of ESA's has been the failure of their advocates, leaders, and staff to tell the public about, and sell them on the virtues of the resources and cost/time effectiveness of the middle echelon of school government.

6. The ESA movement is based on belief in institutional cooperation and shared decision-making among interest groups committed to good, ever-improving educational change. This calls for a clear understanding on the part of all players of where the power rests on any given issue and what the benefits of cooperation are for each participating group. If there are no immediate and visible gains or at least no imbalance between loss and gain for existing groups, then cooperative ventures such as ESA's will be seen as an unnecessary addition to the system.

Roles and Functions

A review of the literature on regional education service agencies reveals striking similarities among their roles and functions. Although their basic forms, methods and purposes of creation, governance, organization, and financing differ from state

to state, and even within states, their roles and functions translated into actual services are remarkably similar. Practically all perform some duties and functions in support of the state education agency and in providing general educational leadership. Additionally, most function as deliverers of special education services. Roles in providing specialized services in such areas as management, media, staff development, curriculum, and educational planning, and in conducting vocational and technical education programs are also fairly common among existing ESA's. Harold S. Davis, in his 1976 report entitled Educational Service Centers in the U.S.A..[12] has surveyed all fifty states to determine the status of existing ESA's in each. He describes ESA's on the basis of data collected in four categories relating to the existence of legislation. These categories are:

1. Permissive - those states with specific legislation encouraging the development of ESA's on a voluntary basis.
2. Mandatory - those states with legislation mandating the formation of ESA's and membership in the agency.
3. Mandatory/voluntary - those states with legislation mandating the formation of ESA's but leaving membership voluntary.
4. No legislation - those states with no legislation regarding the formation of ESA's.[13]

[12] Harold S. Davis, Educational Service Centers in the U.S.A., New Haven, Connecticut, Connecticut State Department of Education, 1976.

[13] Ibid., Foreword

In his description of units in each state, he lists roles and functions as services and/or programs and usually relates briefly the ways in which these vary within a state. For example, he says of Michigan, a mandatory state system:

> "Although the mandate of the legislation is clear, how each ISD (Intermediate School District) perceives its role may vary."[14]

Thus, even with mandated legislation, roles and functions may vary, and appropriately so since ESA's will prosper to the extent that they actually offer meaningful educational services to constituents.

A number of studies have been conducted on the intermediate school district in Michigan. Most of these address the problem of actual and recommended roles and functions for the fifty-eight intermediate units in the state. Furthermore, since 1968 eight such studies have further recommended one or another kind of reorganization of the system. An examination of the present roles and functions of the ESA in Michigan and the recommendations that have emanated from the eight studies will serve as a basis for remarks concerning roles and functions generally.

Many mandated and permissive functions are currently assigned to Michgian ESA's. The assumption has been made in ascribing these roles and functions that the local school district

[14] Ibid, p.41.

is the foundation of the educational system and the intermediate district serves a supportive role. Two recent studies[15] have included a compilation of the mandated and permissive responsibilities. Although format and order are different in the compilations, the responsibilities listed are the same. Those mandated and permissive functions appearing in the "Report of Blue Ribbon Task Force on Intermediate School Districts"[16] are included in Appendix A to show the extent of ESA responsibilities in one state.

The "Study of Intermediate School District Functions and Organizational Structure" suggests "a need for a complete revision of these statutes to clarify the role of the ISD, to define the parameters of service, and to create an effective governance structure."[17] The Blue Ribbon Task Force also recommends revisions "to accord intermediate districts authority commensurate with assigned responsibility"[18] along with adoption of the "'sunset' concept. . . to assure that responsibilities are maintained current at all times."[19] If such revisions are indeed necessary,

[15] Task Force appointed by the State Board of Education, August 11, 1976, "Report of Blue Ribbon Task Force on Intermediate School Districts," January 7, 1977, and Alexander J. Kloster, "A Study of Intermediate School District Functions and Organizational Structure,"Marquette, Michigan, June 30, 1978.

[16] Elizabeth Dambrose, Administrative Assistant, Wayne County Intermediate School District, Compiler of Summaries.

[17] Kloster, Op. cit., p. 15.

[18] Task force appointed by the State Board of Education, August 11, 1976, Op. cit., p. 16.

[19] Ibid.

they will have to take into account still other actual and possible functions. Since this list was compiled, the ESA in Michigan has had another permissive responsibility added by state law: It may serve as the fiscal agent for the professional development of school staff. Proposals have been made by the Superintendent of Public Instruction[20] to include the purchasing and managing of school transportation, centralizing school district purchasing requirements, and coordinating preschool and family education programs as ESA functions. Policy statements of the state board of education additionally ascribe to the ESA roles as centers for data processing and instructional demonstration, as administrators of adult extended learning activities, as liaisons between governmental units, and as auditors of local enrollments and finance.

A report on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Units published in May, 1976, by the Pennsylvania Legislative, Budget and Finance Committee[21] shows that Pennsylvania intermediate units are mandated by state law to conduct specific programs in the area of special education and to provide services to nonpublic school children. Beyond these two functions, the ESA's are authorized under the School Code to offer a broad range of services and conduct programs apparently without limitation. The study further indicates that large variations in services

[20] John W. Porter, Address for AASA - National Organization of County, Intermediate and Educational Service Agencies, Mimosa Hall, Omni International Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, February 17, 1978.

[21] Pennsylvania Legislative, Budget, and Finance Committee, "Report on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit System", Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1976.

among IU's are the result of different degrees of interest and expertise in seeking and receiving federal funds and "encouragement from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to certain IU's to conduct certain functions."[22] The resultant wide range of IU activities has contributed to a lack of public and educational community understanding of the basic roles and functions of the IU. The study states that "a well defined, central description of the overall function and limitations on activities of the intermediate unit system"[23] does not exist and implies that such definition and description would make the operation somehow more effective.

A response to this report, prepared by the executive directors of intermediate units and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, is included as an appendix to the report. Two general statements concerning roles and functions are developed in this response. The first points out that intermediate units "should not provide services to a given district which the district can provide economically and effectively."[24] The second indicates that deliberate legislative action has delineated IU functions in broad categories so that the unique needs of each geographical area can be met with a diversity of programs.

The Pennsylvania Report, like those examining the Michigan system, recommends amending state laws pertaining to the intermediate system. The amendments suggested are: 1) clear definition

[22] Ibid., p. 161.
[23] Ibid., p. 162.
[24] Ibid., p. 195.

of the comprehensive role of the IU, 2) possible limitations on the types of programs and activities of IU's, 3) extent of service recipients beyond defined geographic area, and 4) clarification of authority of Pennsylvania Department of Education to impose on IU's activities which are not designated as IU functions in the law.

Examination of ESA's in other states reveals a similar lack of definition and/or understanding of their roles and functions. Studies conducted in Connecticut, California, Wisconsin, New York, and Minnesota show diversity and flexibility of services and include recommendations for refinement of roles and functions. These studies also indicate that more recently formed ESA's generally have borrowed and benefited from older established units.

From the foregoing discussion, it seems evident that roles and functions of ESA's must be comprehensive, flexible, of high quality, and responsive to the needs of the population served. Although there are concerns by many that more specficity be developed in terms of ESA roles and functions, there is ample evidence that the needs of local school districts vary in many ways. Therefore, it would be impossible to list specifically recommended services that would be appropriate for ESA's in different states and difficult to establish such a list for the units within any given state. Certain general recommendations regarding roles and functions, however, can be derived, and these are directly related to the claimed benefits described earlier.

1. The ESA has a major role to play in coordination and leadership. This role is not authoritarian; rather, it reinforces the policies of the state board of education and the integrity of the local education agency. The education service agency emphasizes educational planning, development, communication and coordination. It is leadership-oriented, and its role is to seek solutions to educational problems requiring information, human skills, and utilization of knowledge and technology. This role complements the state education leadership function and interprets and augments its regulatory role. It simultaneously provides requested coordination and service to local districts without impinging on the authority of their governing boards.
2. The education service agency has a unique role in educational planning. It is in a better position to identify and act on the emerging and changing demands of society than either the state educational agency, which is bound by statutes requiring regulation and inspection, or the local district, which is beset by operational problems. The ESA can assume feedforward planning functions which will identify future actions and feedback functions which relay information about present status to appropriate audiences.

3. The provision of specific services to local education agencies is another task/role of the education service agency. These services are those which the ESA can provide with greater economy, adequacy, quality, and/or efficiency than the local district. They may include data processing of school district payrolls, pupil attendance accounting, testing, media booking, and storage and retrieval of curricular and management information. They may also be related to improving the quality of educational services, including such activities as staff development, research, technical assistance in development and utilization of instructional materials and courses of study, operation of specific programs where low pupil incidence or necessity for specialized techniques or equipment are local constraints, and provision of other services which promote equal educational opportunities for all children. The role of the education service agency in providing such services can be expanded to include the development of better and more appropriate means of measuring educational outcomes; of identifying and disseminating promising educational practices; of promoting cost-effective principles in educational programming activities; of finding or creating processes or alternatives from which member local agencies can select to improve and advance education; and of promoting educational interchange between and among rural,

suburban, and urban school districts.

4. The education service agency also has an important, though not widely recognized or acclaimed, role in influencing educational legislation. AS ESA's have created new patterns of communication within states, developed new spheres of political influence, and become a composite extension of state and local education agencies, their leaders have become advocates for legislation that will improve the functioning of the local districts which they serve, their own organizations, the state educational agency, and the overall system of education in the nation. Unlike the state educational agency, they are not hampered by proximity to the state legislative body with its close financial ties and the necessity of programmatic approval. They have the benefit of a larger representative base than any single local district and hence a more audible political voice. They are more apt to seek legislation to address issues and solve problems than to benefit themselves or their organizations. They can work effectively with state legislatures to interpret and emphasize local problems as they relate to regional and state needs and mandates.
5. Federal legislation, which has created categorical and other educational programs, has had impact on the state, intermediate, and local education agencies also. Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

of 1965 (PL 89-10) and subsequent amendments is aimed at strengthening state education agencies, and Section 505 further encourages cooperative projects among these agencies. Other titles of PL 89-10 identify ESA's as local education agencies and permit them to apply for funds and administer and operate certain educational programs. The latitude in this and other federal legislation regarding program planning and operation has created another area of local/ESA cooperation. It has caused the development of a corps of ESA/local district professionals who work together, usually under ESA leadership, to influence federal educational legislation. These professionals testify before Congressional committees and work with federal agencies to provide information about the actual implementation of legislation to provide services to students. They make suggestions about appropriate revisions to rules and regulations governing program operation and work with Congressional staff members to provide field-related information and to advance possible extensions of current programs and new directions. Additionally, they attend committee and subcommittee hearings and monitor national advisory council meetings. As informed participants in the legislative process, they capably and appropriately function as information sources for those who are responsible for good educational legislation.

6. Finally, the education service agency has a logical and legitimate role as the educational advocate for and coordinator of intergovernmental services in its region. The need for such an advocate/coordinator to bring about cooperation among general governmental, health, welfare, social, and other school services deliverers is well established. The ESA in many states has a mandate to coordinate such services. In meeting this mandate, it has developed the necessary competence and comprehensive perspective to represent and express the interests, concerns, and priorities of the total educational community in relation to other regional service units.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

IN

DISSEMINATION

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS IN DISSEMINATION

Recent History

During the 1960's the federal government began to fund educational research and development (R & D) and to examine innovative educational practices as they related to general school improvement. After a decade of funding new approaches to old problems and of increasing educational R & D, evaluators of programs and Congressional staff discovered that a large array of innovative programs, products, and practices existed. They also found, however, that knowledge about these R & D outcomes and innovations was scattered--some in federal bureaucratic files, some in state education agencies, some in universities, local schools, regional offices, regional education laboratories, and some in the heads of program operators. In an effort to coordinate and use the knowledge that was being generated, Congress in 1972 authorized the National Institute of Education (NIE) as the primary agency for the support of educational research and development. The Congressional authorization specified dual purposes for NIE: 1) the support and use of research and development in a manner that is responsive to the needs of educational practitioners, and 2) the responsibility for carrying out dissemination activities to insure that educational practitioners benefit from research and development outcomes.

In examining these two functions of the newly-created agency, educational leaders began to question the extent to

which R & D outcomes were being used by the local practitioners, how the practitioner found out about them, the effect they were having on classroom or school district educational practice, and the response of the R & D community to the needs and problems that the practitioner identified. They found that local practitioners generally were viewing the funding practices of the past decade as license to "invent", to try something "different", and to "change" whatever they were doing. They knew little about what was happening in a neighboring district and less about the innovations of a nearby state. Universities had continued to be the major developers of educational R & D process; Regional Labs and Centers created by Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act began to create R & D products; and state education agencies grew and expanded, finding new roles and functions as increased federal dollars came their way. During this decade of educational activity and growth, the educational service agency was also coming into existence and experimenting with various operational forms. Its role in educational R & D outcomes and in dissemination as well as its relationships with other educational entities was yet to be determined.

A number of activities in the early 1970's had significant impact on developing ESA functions in the dissemination process. In 1973 the United States Office of Education (USOE), in conjunction with the President's National Advisory Council, the National Association of State ESEA Title III Advisory Committees, and

the ESEA Title III State Program Coordinators began to examine the process of identifying and validating successful educational practices as a force in educational improvement. Dissemination was seen as a major shortcoming in prevailing practice and became a part of the focus of a national effort to put into operation a system of identifying and sharing educational successes. In 1974 the USOE, through its ESEA Title III, Section 306 funds, spent more than sixteen million dollars to develop a producer/consumer/facilitator concept of dissemination. Funds were distributed through state departments of education to local education agencies with validated successful projects. These local agencies were then to act as professional "producers" of educational products for other funded local "consumer" districts wanting to replicate the producer's success.

The SEA further provided funds to "facilitate" this process by selecting an agency to act as a manager or broker of educational change. This broker/facilitator assisted or created linkage between the "producer" and "consumer" districts. In some states the state education agency assumed this "facilitator" role; in others, a large local school district was selected; but in many of the states, where educational service agencies existed, these agencies became the facilitators. In those latter instances, new relationships were established between the SEA and the ESA. These new connections were based on cooperative SEA/ESA functions in carrying out a federal directive, on the development of closer working

relationships as common goals were identified, implemented, and evaluated, and on the demonstrated ability of selected ESA's to conduct specific tasks beyond their service areas. The 306 producer/consumer/facilitator projects in time became the National Diffusion Network. They shared their successes and failures, produced sufficient documented research to account for a number of doctoral dissertations, and responded with enough adequacy to educational needs to have identifiable and funded remnants still in existence.

In the early and mid 1970's, NIE undertook extensive studies on the nature of the educational enterprise; on state and national dissemination and resource agencies such as ERIC,[25] RISE,[26] JDRP,[27] the National Dissemination Leadership Project, and the National Diffusion Network; and on building capacity for educational renewal and reform. The latter study in large part outlined general foundations for an NIE dissemination program, and created a wave of reactions in various segments of the educational community.

[25] The Educational Resources Information Center, which is responsible for providing to the full educational community access to the complete body of English documents about education.

[26] Research and Information Services for Education, a former ESEA Title III project, now funded by NIE with support from the Montgomery County Schools, which provides individually tailored responses from current educational literature and existing practices to educational practitioners with a stated need.

[27] Joint Dissemination Review Panel, an NIE-USOE panel which reviews the effectiveness of educational products and processes developed with federal funds. JDRP approval makes products and processes eligible for USOE or NIE dissemination.

Among the reactions to the NIE plan to build R & D capacity were:

1. It was overly ambitious and reflected a theoretical orientation focused on the interests and perspectives of researchers in higher education. A corollary to this reaction was that the plan minimized the SEA's role in the process.
2. The strategies relating to ERIC duplicated other efforts and did not specify either intent or means to build on previous efforts.
3. The dissemination function and its inter-organizational relationships were not sufficiently emphasized.
4. The study did not list specific recommendations or priorities. One critic questioned the production of additional information before patterns existed for the delivery of existing information or access to it.
5. There was a lack of knowledge about the extent and magnitutde of research and development activities within state and local agencies and about dissemination activities between them.

Following this study and reactions to it, a number of states developed proposals to "build capacities" in state education agencies for diffusion/dissemination networks. These plans generally focused on the state's role in performing leadership and change functions. Most noted the need for some sort of intermediary or linkage system

based on the assumption that the impact of dissemination/diffusion is diminished by distance between units. Education service agencies were mentioned rarely, if at all.

These studies and reactions to them were instrumental in the planning and development of the National Institute of Education's Research and Development Exchange (RDx). In the fall of 1976, NIE awarded grants to certain regional laboratories to develop plans for carrying out three major dissemination goals aimed at improving educational practice. These goals were: development with personnel of existing organizations of ways of coordinating dissemination activities and resources; increase in the understanding and use of research and development outcomes by the personnel of organizations whose major responsibility is to work with practitioners; and increase in the shared understanding and application of information about practitioner needs and efforts to meet those needs.[28] An underlying feature was NIE's commitment to working through existing agencies and institutions whenever possible, rather than creating new ones.

The responsibility for carrying out these goals was given to regional laboratories which were assigned specific functions.

[28]"The R & D Exchange: An Emerging Effort, " A September 21, 1977 version of a discussion paper, adapted from an August, 1977 version by Research for Better Schools.

Five regional exchanges (Rx)[29] were chosen to increase practitioner's access to and use of R & D outcomes, to enhance their capability to select and use R & D, and to help them influence the direction of R & D. A Resource and Referral System (RRS), located in the Center for Vocational Education (CVE), provided comprehensive information on R & D resources, information to Rx's and their clients on ways to tap resources, and actual research and development on improving information resources. Linkage Training Services (LTS), provided by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, was to supply information and counselling on dissemination knowledge and skills, management tools, and human resources to Rx's and their clients in developing and delivering dissemination training programs. A Research and Development Information Service (RDIS) to identify and analyze existing communication networks in selected priority areas, create new communication channels, disseminate this information to Rx's, and conduct R & D on knowledge transformation was created in CEMREL. Finally, a System Support Service (SSS) was established in the Far West Laboratory (FWL) to facilitate the operation of the RDx. Facilitative activities were designed to include coordination of feedforward data, information on exemplary practices, and internal communications. FWL personnel were also charged with maintenance of appropirate public relations and providing an executive secretary for the RDx.

[29] Appalachian Educational Laboratory (AEL), Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory (CEMREL), Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), and Research for Better Schools (RBS).

This ambitious system located in seven widely-scattered regional laboratories involved participation of NIE, USOE, SEA, ESA, and regional laboratory RDx and other staff in three system planning meetings during the three month planning period (fall 1976). Although the meetings were designed for maximum input from "field" representatives, they actually operated for the benefit of information exchange and planning between and among the members of the system. Neither real nor effective feedforward information came from assembled representatives outside the system. Instead, territorial conflicts were aired by all organizational levels represented, with each group claiming known strengths in carrying out the proposed RDx functions. Representatives from education service agencies generally expressed their support for a dissemination network that would solve problems at the practitioner level but offered few, if any, suggestions relative to appropriate roles for their agencies. This could be a reflection of the status of problem recognition in ESA's in 1976; they were probably at that time more concerned with finance and governance than with dissemination per se or with the image building that would result from participation in a national dissemination effort.

Present Status

The role of education service agencies has grown considerably since 1976. As state education agencies have shared responsibilities with them and local education agencies have sought their help in providing specially-identified services; as federal agencies have provided funds for studying and defining their roles and functions

within a three-echelon state educational system; as national organizations have recognized them as a viable force in the delivery of educational services; and as they have formed their own national organization (NOCIESA - National Organization of County, Intermediate, and Educational Service Agencies), education service agencies have changed. They are providing better services to local agencies, fostering greater cooperation with state agencies, planning and developing more long-range solutions to educational problems, and taking appropriate leadership roles in the education community. Dissemination/diffusion functions have been among the expanded responsibilities for many education service agencies. Reasons for expansion in this area probably vary, but state education agency support along with physical and ideological proximity to local education agencies has created considerable acceptance of the ESA as an appropriate cog in statewide networks of dissemination, information storage and retrieval, and research and development. The Michigan state education agency has been particularly active in developing this role in the ESA's of the state.

As early as 1969, an educational information system for the state of Michigan was proposed by Dr. George Grimes, then supervisor of Curriculum Laboratories of the Detroit Public Schools. This system included dissemination as an integral part. In 1974, the Wayne County Intermediate School District utilized many of the assumptions of this system in developing its role as the Michigan Statewide Facilitator in the ESEA Title III, Section 306 project.

Later, when the Michigan Facilitator project ended, the Michigan Department of Education created four "supplemental centers" located in intermediate service agencies and charged them with dissemination/diffusion responsibilities beyond their local service boundaries. These supplemental centers appropriately became parts of existing information/resource centers already operating to some extent in the four education service agencies. The Michigan Department of Education has recently added four more supplemental centers to the original four, creating more direct services to local agencies, particularly those in sparsely-populated areas. Because of the diversity of the educational practice community, the Michigan Department of Education and the ESA supplemental centers have created a variety of dissemination efforts and strategies to link practitioners with appropriate research and development outcomes. The overriding assumption, however, in all of the centers has been a consumer-oriented approach both to dissemination and to the adoption/adaptation of research and development outcomes. This approach has led to identification of local district linkers, training them along with SEA and ESA personnel in such areas as: identification of needs and possible options for meeting needs; consideration of options and selection of the most appropriate for a particular situation; and assistance in the use and adaptation of a selected option. A particular strength of Michigan ESA's in the statewide dissemination effort has been their ability to involve urban school districts as well as rural and suburban LEA's.

The number of adoptions/adaptions of state and nationally validated projects by urban districts in Michigan has been impressive. This success contrasts with the findings of the Stanford Research Study of the National Diffusion Network, which pointed to the scarcity of NDN adoptions in urban schools across the country.

Where ESA's exist, they have also been directly involved with Regional Exchanges in the NIE R & D Exchange. The CEMREL and SEDL reports, however, show the wide range of potential involvement. While both Rx's contacted SEA's to determine which, if any, ESA's might be included in developing baseline data, beyond this the involvement was different. CEMREL reported ESA's in ten of the twelve states in their planning region and found that the variation in the organization and function of these intermediate units within the states was the "most notable difference" observed. SEDL, on the other hand, found that only two of the five states in its planning area had ESA's, and only one of these two was sufficiently well-established to be included in the Rx planning activities. Because of larger numbers of ESA's to survey, CEMREL's contact with each was cursory (and occasionally not wholly accurate) while SEDL's survey of two ESA's in one state was fairly comprehensive. Both RX's, in accord with NIE, considered the SEA as the primary target audience; SEDL specified the ESA as a secondary audience only when its SEA indicated that they wanted them directly involved. The same SEA permission was also required for SEDL involvement with large urban LEA's, other dissemination groups and colleges and universities.

The NIE draft paper, "A Summary of Baseline Reports", which synthesizes the reports of the above two and the other three Regional Information Contractors, states that "ESA's are widely deemed to be of great importance as a dissemination link between the SEA and the LEA."[30] Nineteen of the thirty-three states surveyed have some type of education service agency serving this function to some extent. Participants in this and other linkage systems are described in this draft paper as general parts of a dissemination model which was formulated from information from the regional exchange baseline reports. This model presents some questions relative to the role and function of ESA's. Answers need to be directed toward the role of the ESA as a "synthesizer of knowledge",[31] its view of its personnel and organization as information processors, its role in quality control of products and processes, and its stake in research and development.

The dissemination models and theories implicit in the baseline reports and summary and described by Lingwood[32] have come from other environments, e.g., agriculture, science and military.

30 "A Summary of the RIE Baseline Reports" (Draft), January 5, 1977, p. 18.

31 Ibid., p. 3.

32 David A. Lingwood in collaboration with Ronald G. Havelock, "The Balanced Producer-Client Linkage Exchange: The R & D Exchange as Seen from Models of Knowledge Production and Utilization: Overview and Concluding Sections of Full Paper," Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August, 1977.

The described models of dissemination have roots in marketing, communications, cybernetics, automation, physics, and human factors engineering. The vagaries of educational institutions and the LEA practitioner make a perfect match with any of these models and methods impossible. Therefore, the ESA needs to examine both its internal capabilities and its service recipients in terms of a best fit with a model established cooperatively with existing networks and understood by its staff and clients. This model should also be congruent with the dissemination mission of the SEA.

Access

The education service agency is in a unique dissemination position in the education hierarchy. It has access to a large constituency of educational practitioners and simultaneously to bodies of education knowledge. It can provide appropriate linkage between the two by offering help to the practitioner in solving real problems and by developing field uses for R & D products. Its unique position allows this balanced impact without infringement on the prescribed missions of other agencies. This is possible because of a number of factors including the following:

1. Generally the needs of clients, based on their requests for service, control interaction with the ESA. This tends to minimize competition and conflict with other service agencies.

2. The ESA can maintain information banks geared to needs of a resonably-sized and known client population, making rapid response to client needs possible.
3. The charters of most ESA's include language which facilitates mutual information exchange between client and service producers.
4. The ESA provides linkage between the LEA and the state education agency in organizational, procedural, and content matters with understanding of, and respect for, the missions and responsibilities of each.
5. The ESA frequently serves as a broker to connect clients to resources in other agencies and networks.
6. The ESA in its present state rarely is a producer of R & D products. Therefore, it is interested in seeking and developing products and processes from other sources to meet identified educational needs.
7. The ESA provides to LEA's other services which can support dissemination functions, e.g., staff development activities, consultation in specific academic and curricular areas, materials development and utilization.
8. ESA staff is involved and has established relationships with constituents and can link dissemination

function to existing needs and on-going improvement efforts.

Because of the diversity of the educational practice community, a variety of dissemination strategies and efforts are needed to link practitioners with appropriate solutions to their problems. The ESA has been specifically cited in at least two studies[33] as the most appropriate agency to provide dissemination services to isolated rural schools. The studies found that in serving rural schools, the intermediate service agencies were most effective when they supplied services involving field practice, manpower, program innovation and support, rather than when they just provided information, although unlimited information service was available to the rural clients.

ESA's also appear to have an accepted role in providing dissemination services to suburban school districts. It has been postulated that ESA staffs are largely representative of the suburban community and its social millieu and therefore feel greater kinship and ease of access in familiar territory. Suburban districts also are viewed as having fewer educational and financial problems and are therefore considered more amenable to dissemination overtures. Leadership personnel is easier to identify when bureaucratic layers are thinner, and ESA credibility

33 Robert Fussell, "Oregon Pilot Retrieval Dissemination Project", Umatilla Intermediate District, Pendleton, Oregon, 1973; Everett Edington and Leonard Hays, "Exemplary Dissemination Programs for Intermediate Units Serving Rural Schools", ERIC/CRESS and RREA, September, 1977.

and legitimacy of contact is more readily accepted in suburban districts. Those ESA's with a mix of rural, suburban, and urban districts included in their service area generally agree that suburban districts are the easiest ones in which to initiate and conduct appropriate dissemination activities, small rural districts appear most eager for suitable services, and urban districts are the most difficult to impact.

There are many reasons for the difficulties which exist in ESA/large urban LEA relationships. Some of these are rooted in the histories of the two units of school government. The emergence of large local school districts in the 1920's with more and frequently better qualified staff than that of county offices eliminated the need for county educational services to them. As the transition from county to intermediate units took place, major cities were usually left out as service recipients, often by choice, because they felt they could provide all of the services they needed on their own. For example, the six largest cities in New York were excluded from the intermediate system by law because the program was devised as a service to rural schools, and large cities were considered to have sufficient resources to manage alone. In Pennsylvania the major cities were made independent intermediate units, the Philadelphia unit serving the surrounding county. Recently the trend has

been to include large cities[34] in, or to give them the option of joining[35] the education service agency.

Declining enrollments, millage losses, desegregation problems, accountability, competency-based educational requirements, back-to-basics, and tax reform movements have probably contributed to a greater extent to the problems of city school systems than to those of suburban and rural districts. These problems have increased the probability of large city LEA's seeking direct service from the ESA and looking to this unit for leadership. They have also significantly decreased the likelihood of the overlapping or duplication of services in the two units.

The advantage to the ESA of including cities lies in the value of building bridges between the urban system and the area around it. City participation also increases the possibility of long-range regional planning which may include other regional organizations. Such planning helps to overcome the isolation of the schools and utilizes the resources of the communities and the region. Another benefit of including large city LEA's in the ESA service area is the potential of some of the regional services to mitigate the social and racial separation that has arisen through the development of suburban and inner-city housing patterns.

[34] In Michigan, Iowa, and Washington cities are included as recipients of services equal to other LEA's.

[35] City participation is optional in Colorado and Nebraska, for example.

Cities can also present problems for the ESA. There is frequently the question of the ratio of service in terms of numbers of students and personnel. If the urban LEA represents one-half of the ESA service constituency, are they entitled to half of the ESA resources? When it comes to electing a regional board, is their representation equal to that of other smaller LEA's or proportional to their huge school populations?

Dissemination activities present special problems relative to large urban school districts. The National Diffusion Network has documented the fact that "NDN adopters tend to be rural and suburban rather than urban",[36] and this finding can probably be generalized to all dissemination/diffusion activities in large LEA's. It appears, however, that ESA's can play a role in alleviating some of these difficulties. An examination of the role of the Wayne County Intermediate School District, which includes the school district of the City of Detroit among its thirty-six constituent local education agencies, shows that dissemination/diffusion activities are occuring regularly and effectively in the Detroit schools. Several reasons for this apparent success in working with an urban school are postulated:

1. The ESA has staff with the special skills and experience necessary to attract the attention of urban school personnel. Frequently these

[36] "Findings and Recommendations: Stanford Research Institutes 1977 Evaluative Study of the National Diffusion Network," Volume I, p. 100.

recognized skills and experience have been gained in an urban school setting.

2. The ESA has committed more time and effort to serving the urban LEA in recognition of its size, the existing layers of bureaucracy, and its special needs. The rationale for providing additional time lies in the belief that the problems of the urban LEA are the same as those of other local districts served and that the process of aiding local Detroit staff in finding appropriate solutions has ramifications for the entire service area.
3. The problems of gaining entry into a large, complex urban system have been partially met by having ESA staff assume a leadership role in dissemination activities. The leadership role is expanded and shared through a system of linkers within the Detroit schools. These people are in leadership positions and assume a leadership role within Detroit.

The ESA, in the middle position of the three echelon state system of education, has unbounded possibilities for developing, maintaining, interpreting, and encouraging cooperative arrangements in education. Its relationships with state departments of

education has been described as antagonistic,[37] as an uneasy truce, as competitive, and as cooperative. Depending upon the situation, personnel, political climate, and the role expectations for the agencies, all of these relationships are possible and have undoubtedly existed. However, current trends appear to indicate a growing alliance between state departments of education and ESA's, each reinforcing the role and function of the other to improve the educational process.

ESA leadership personnel have frequently expressed concern about the incompatibility of state-imposed regulatory and supervisory functions and the service functions of ESA's for constituent local districts. There has been general agreement that a service agency cannot overcome the dichotomy that exists in meeting the needs of clients while simultaneously acting to enforce mandates and supervise compliance. A recent study in Michigan,[38] however, refutes the belief that ESA's cannot be both consultative and regulatory in their relationships with local school districts by citing the opinions of superintendents of rural, suburban, and urban schools of various sizes. Their responses to a questionnaire indicate a preference for the regional unit rather than the state

[37] Charles M. Achelles and Thomas A. Gentry, "The State Department of Education and the Voluntary Regional Service Agency: Adversary Relationship or Uneasy Truce?", Planning and Changing, Volume 7, Winter 1977, p. 155.

[38] Kloster, Op. cit., p. 84.

to provide regulatory and supervisory functions since the state agency is considered more distant, less involved in, and less sensitive to local conditions and problems.

The same study reports that the Michigan Department of Education believes that the intermediate school district network should be strengthened both in regulatory functions for the state and in permissive roles. Among the permissive areas which state department of education personnel see as appropriate for a stronger ESA are:

1. More technical assistance for LEA's, particularly in the areas of grant application and program evaluation
2. Responsibility for long range regional planning
3. Responsibility for educational research and development
4. Expanded role in educational policy development
5. More administrative support to LEA's, including leadership training
6. Primary role in the development of more sophisticated information systems with improved data bases
7. Expanded role as communication link
8. Responsibility for information dissemination[39]

[39] Ibid., pp. 88-89

The ESA in its structural position in the educational hierarchy has greater access to the state's educational system than its constituent districts have. Although any given local district can certainly approach the SEA and receive whatever assistance that staff and time permit, the ESA can reach the SEA as an advocate for the LEA, as the representative of several LEA's with common interests (a strength for the LEA's and a time-saver for the SEA), and as a mediator in cases where state and local accord is lacking. In those states where an SEA employee, such as an associate superintendent, has the responsibility for developing productive and effective relationships with ESA's and where ESA's have assigned specific personnel to such interface tasks, this accessibility increases dramatically. Moreover, the organizational communication among all three levels of educational government, the complementarity of roles, and coordination of function are also improved, and SEA leadership becomes visible apart from regulation and is frequently so interpreted by ESA personnel.

Many of the existing SEA/ESA/LEA relationships have come about as the result of the enactment of Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and its amendments. Title V had as its purpose the strengthening of state departments of education so that they could be responsive enough and provide

sufficient leadership to carry out the new federal mandates as they related to LEA's. The resulting expansion of SEA's tended to overcome many "traditional" approaches to educational problems and to thrust the SEA into leadership roles demanding cooperation. The evolving ESA filled a void in the leadership/regulatory dichotomy, provided feedback to the state about its involvement in program development, exercised an authoritative role in regional educational program planning, and provided direct and consultative services needed and requested by LEA's. Out of these beginnings, some states have developed strong SEA and ESA leadership to provide maximum assistance to LEA's. This kind of system emphasizes the cooperative nature of the three-echelon system. It allows the ESA freedom to serve the LEA in conjunction with SEA leaders in a risk-taking, change-oriented way while developing cooperative means to facilitate LEA transition into, and adaptation of, programs mandated by legislative bodies. It maintains the autonomy of the LEA but assists in the development of local leadership which can be proactive as well as responsive to educational change and mandates. Finally, it minimizes adversary relationships and strengthens appropriate roles for each unit.

The relationship of the ESA and the SEA in dissemination is important. There is no question that they have the potential for highly complementary and cooperative roles in the process. In Michigan these roles are delineated so that each agency understands its contributory part in reaching the user. There is also

legislative encouragement in Michigan for the ESA to engage in dissemination activities. Section 83 of the Michigan State Aid Act provides financial resources to ESA's to establish and operate "media centers". As implemented, this legislation provides resources for media to enhance information storage and retrieval and broadly to complement dissemination activities. Additionally, the Michigan Department of Education has provided resources to establish as a part of certain existing intermediate school districts special dissemination/diffusion units with responsibilities beyond the ISD service area. Within the state there is SEA/ESA coordination in dissemination planning, implementation, and evaluation. However, this coordination breaks down somewhat when federal agencies become involved.

Without question, the dissemination link with the federal or multi-state regional unit is the SEA. Both the NDN and the RDx dissemination efforts have demonstrated the efficacy of this system of linkage. However, in both cases there has been either a lack of knowledge of the wide variety of existing SEA/ESA systems and relationships or too great an emphasis on a "general" system designed to fit a non-existent "average". The result has been the same distrust of the "new" process that has been observable in creating the "new" intermediate unit. Both the NDN and the RDx have made progress in including all of the partners in the state educational system, and each appears to recognize the primacy of the state agency as the unit responsible for the education of its citizens.

The NDN after a momentous start has become mired in its own limitations. Issues currently under its consideration include the appropriateness of the NDN's role in providing dissemination funding to exemplary programs developed without the use of federal monies and to promising programs with a need for developing additional evaluative data. After considerable study of the dissemination process and of the kinds of products to be handled by the process, the NDN appears to have only minimal activities in place. The importance of its efforts appear to have been its utilization of existing institutions and the strengthening of ties between selected producers of R & D outcomes and certain kinds of consumers. In states were ESA's existed and were selected by SEA's for relevant participation in the system, the NDN impetus was instrumental in the development of new systems of access and often stronger dissemination relationships between the SEA and the regional unit.

The more recent R & D Exchange is also having an impact on SEA/ESA dissemination activities. Clarification of the premises under which the RDx operates and specification of its role(s) with existing agencies will minimize conflict within states and increase its effectiveness. In the "Solicitation for the 9-month Continuations of the R & D Exchange Planning Contracts" an operating principle states that the "primary target audience of the RDx will be the linker who acts as a broker between the producer of R & D

resources and the consumer."[40] Who this linker is, where he is located, how his role as "broker" is defined are unclear. Although principles are broad statements of belief, this one could create operational problems--particularly if many agencies had personnel who considered themselves "linkers". Later in the solicitation participating users of the Regional Exchanges are identified. State dissemination personnel are considered primary users and ESA's, large city LEA's, and other dissemination agencies are listed as secondary users. "Linkers", appropriately defined/ identified in these units, may have difficulty establishing suitable roles and relationships between R & D resource producers and the consumer.

A stated objective of the RDx system is to "make R & D efforts and outcomes more responsive to local and regional needs."[41] Regional is a word used frequently in all of the NIE RDx reports and solicitations. It is unclear what area is meant by the term. In some cases it appears to be the region served by a Regional Exchange, in others a state or group of states, and occasionally a sub-state area, perhaps an ESA or an LEA.

[40] "Solicitation for the 9-month Continuation of the R & D Exchange Planning Contracts." Developed collaboratively by R & D Exchange Planning Contractors at AEL, CEDaR, CEMREL, CVE, FWL, NWREL, RBS, and SEDL and by the Consumer Information Branch, School Practice and Service Division, NIE, February 25, 1977, p. 7.

[41] Ibid., p. 13.

For maximum SEA/ESA/LEA utilization of the RDx, clarification of ways to access the system and of relationships between educational units in the process of access is necessary. The ESA can be a major user of the system because of its unique relationships with SEA's and LEA's. In fact, both the core and optional activities for regional exchanges[42] are frequently carried out (utilizing SEA input as appropriate) by established ESA's on a routine basis for the LEA's they serve.

[42] "The R & D Exchange: An Emerging Effort," Op. cit., pp. 13-16.

ESA's and the R & D EXCHANGE

Educational Apartheid

The relationship of the ESA to the R & D Exchange is dependent upon its defined roles and functions within its own state and upon bonds established with the SEA and with its service LEA's. Both the original solicitation for the R & D Exchange and the network as implemented have included the intermediate unit, where it exists, in some way. However, full ESA utility in the system will be accomplished only when the mission of the R & D Exchange is clearly understood and articulated and the place of the various kinds of ESA's is determined. Each unit in the dissemination system - from research to education practice - must recognize the impact of its role upon the rest of the system. Disseminators, i.e., those who facilitate communication between the education research and development community and the educational practitioner, can have a broad range of functions. However, the present duplication and fragementation of services, poor communication channels and techniques, existing organizational autonomy and proprietorship, and taxpayer concern about the adequacy of information which produces educational change and decisions limit the effectiveness of any given unit and create apartheid in the total system.

The decentralization and autonomy of educational practitioners --in universities, community colleges, local schools, state departments of education, ESA's, non-public schools, and industry-- have resulted in a pluralistic system in which change occurs incrementally and usually individually. R & D efforts, which are similarly fragmented and autonomous, also result in uneven

educational progress. The various divisions, branches, bureaus, sections, and programs of USOE and NIE, the service areas of SEA's, the departments of universities, regional labs and centers, ESA's, and numerous private foundations influence educational change by identifying issues, providing funds, developing projects, or initiating solutions to identified problems. In many instances both the practitioner and the R & D community act as disseminators to one or more audiences. Some agencies are both producers and utilizers of R & D internally. Some have well coordinated programs and channels for dissemination; more, however, have decentralized activities with each branch or unit attempting to disseminate its own activities. The scattering of units and the diversity of policies and procedures, on the one hand, hinder dissemination and on the other create a need for both a comprehensive dissemination system and an understanding of the processes by which the dissemination occurs.

The R & D Exchange and the ESA, as relative newcomers in the educational system, have opportunities to develop new collaborative activities and productive interorganizational relationships which may impact dissemination. These activities and relationships are not direct functions between the ESA and the RDx. Each organization has opportunities to function both separately and together to improve the faulty communication that exists between the producers and consumers of research and development products and processes. The RDx has collected and synthesized information about the status

of dissemination and compiled it into a baseline report. Although the data gathering techniques may be questioned, the fact that the data were collected and synthesized in one place is important. The sponsorship by the USOE and NIE of dissemination forums and linkage training programs involving the RDx and state, ESA, local and Federal representatives has also been a positive step in improving dissemination and use of knowledge to solve educational problems.

The ESA, as an organization closer to the practitioner and often responsible for technical assistance, is a capable, willing, and appropriate agent to provide the link between R & D producer and consumer. Its potential role in the R & D Exchange should be explored at the Rx level so that neither organization duplicates the other's activities but each builds upon the knowledge, resources, and skills of the other. Probably the initiative for proposing cooperative ventures will have to be assumed by the Rx, since some ESA's are still not aware of its existence or mission.

Need for Continuing Access

As studies of dissemination efforts which are focused on supporting school improvement proliferate, it becomes increasingly important that the needs of educational practitioners be addressed. The education service agency has a unique role to play in such an effort since it has direct access to a large constituency of educational practitioners and simultaneously to bodies of educational knowledge. The ESA further has the capability of mounting interdisciplinary approaches to the solution of complex educational

problems. For example, in Michigan several ESA's have worked cooperatively with SEA, LEA and higher education personnel to plan, implement, and provide assistance to teacher centers. Although a random poll conducted by AASA shows that superintendents generally distrust the teacher-center movement,[43] the selective use of LEA/ESA/SEA university personnel has added some credibility and credence to the movement in Michigan. Both the R & D community and the practitioner attribute much of this acceptance to the active role of the ESA. Included in this role are:

1. Identification and interpretation of needs of the LEA.
2. Provision by the ESA of other related services which complement the dissemination function of the teacher center.
3. Advocacy for LEA priorities.
4. Established access to SEA.
5. Emerging cooperative alliances with universities, e.g., pre- versus inservice functions.

There are other valid reasons for an expanded role for the ESA in dissemination. Among these are certain limitations of LEA's and SEA's in the existing educational system. Stephens has stated that LEA's "do not presently possess nor will they in the future be allowed to acquire, even if so compelled, the management, technical, and/or fiscal capabilities to respond in any meaningful way to the

[43] "Random Poll of Members Show Superintendents Distrust Federally-Funded Teacher Centers Now Being Organized," The School Administrator, AASA, Vol. 35, No.8, September, 1978, p.7.

vast majority of...identified priorities in education."[44] He further says that "state education agencies, while possessing and/or being able to acquire many of the prerequisites to successfully assist local education agency programming efforts, cannot and/or will not do so due to certain philosophical, legal and/or organization and programming constraints."[45] The ESA, in its intermediate position, is capable of accessing both of these agencies and providing information either to the SEA, which is the primary client of the Rx, or, when appropriate, directly to the Rx. The need for continuing access to R & D is vital to the ESA if it is to continue to serve its local constituents through providing leadership, coordination, planning, curricular and management services, and dissemination. At the same time, the RDX can work more efficiently and with greater cost-work effectiveness with the LEA by outreach through the SEA to the educational service agency. The ESA is in a better position to provide feed forward rather than feed back information. It further can assist in sharing knowledge within school systems, between schools and within a given state. In those states with established ESA's the RDx should continue to expand their roles in dissemination as effective and viable partners. Meanwhile, the ESA's should recognize their stake in the establishment of more effective research, development

[44] E. Robert Stephens, "The Future of Regionalism in Elementary-Secondary Education," presented at First Annual Seminar of Regional Service Agencies National Convention, AASA, Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 19, 1976, p.9.

[45] Ibid.

and dissemination networks both within their own states and nationally.

Barriers

Three major barriers exist in incorporating the ESA into the RDx effort. These are the diversity of existing ESA's, the lack of understanding on the part of the Rx's about the roles and functions of those ESA's about which they have reported,[46] and the problems relating to proprietorship. The differences in the developmental status of ESA's in different states and within the same state create differences in resources which the Rx can utilize and which the ESA can offer for dissemination. When limited ESA mission and activity is the result of constituent priority or state design, the Rx can provide impetus for better coordination, improved service, and increased knowledge utilization. In more sophisticated intermediate units of greater maturity and longer experience the role of the Rx may be that of delegation of many of the activities which it presently views as its mandate. Any attempt to generalize the RDx relationship with ESA's is unfortunate. The effort must be developmental and capable of responding to a variety of ESA organizational patterns, resources, and clients.

The baseline reports of the Rx's deal adequately with the diversity of ESA's, state succinctly specific examples of different types of units in different states, and clearly show variations

[46] It is also possible that the vague and sometimes inaccurate comments about ESA's in the Rx baseline reports are the result of small samples or even lack of ESA understanding of their own roles and functions.

in existing dissemination activities of diverse ESA's. However, some major gaps in understanding the actual operation/management/programming functions of the organization appear in some of the reports. A possible solution to this problem might be selective exchanges of the Rx and ESA staff so that both understanding and communication might be improved and interdisciplinary approaches to the problems of dissemination might be explored.

Although an operating principle of the RDx is that its activities will complement and support other agencies, building on existing activities and functions through linkage/brokerage strategies, these "other" agencies fear loss of autonomy and power when a new organization (or new role for an established organization) appears. Proprietary control and unwillingness to share resources will inhibit the effectiveness of planned collaborative efforts unless the Rx contractors are constantly alert to organizing and revising strategies to produce maximum use of resources at all educational levels. The initial priorities of the RDx[47] (identified by the Rx's in the process of collecting baseline data) are cited as basic skills in reading and math and competency-based education. The limitation of areas of dissemination for the newly-created Rx is probably appropriate, and these two priorities may well be SEA preferences; however, such arbitrary selection of problem areas may suggest the threat of proprietary intervention and limit participation of some potential "general" clientele.

[47] "The R & D Exchange: An Emerging Effort," Op. cit., p. 8.

Cost Effectiveness

The RDx principle of utilizing existing activities and functions in established organizations rather than replacing or recreating them is the most cost-beneficial/cost-effective means of developing a nationwide dissemination configuration. The ESA is one of the existing organizations that can be utilized effectively in this way. Expansion of ESA activities into the RDx is the most natural and least expensive when the ESA has participated in state-initiated and NDN dissemination activities. In such cases some mechanisms for meeting the diverse needs of practitioners already exist. New ones can be developed most economically on the existing base when the physical, social,and professional distance between the disseminator or the knowledge producer and the consumer is smallest, as with ESA's and their local constituents.

Where mature, experienced ESA's with adequate resources exist, they usually have established dissemination systems which are often parts of other networks. These other networks and the ESA should be major clients of the RDx (with SEA input/approval/ recognition), serving as channels of information and knowledge for the local school practitioner whom the RDx cannot directly serve in a cost-effective manner. Possible exceptions to the above statements are large city LEA's which in many cases have developed internal dissemination practices to survive the social and political pressures of their various communities. Such LEA's

may become primary clients of the Rx once the local system is identified, understood, and as in the case of ESA's and other sub-state units, with SEA input, approval, or recognition.

The most economical way for the RDx to operate is through the 50 SEA's which then would develop systems suited to their particular needs and issues. The problems associated with such a system are the same ones that caused the creation of ESA's in the first place -- SEA distance from the ultimate consumer, faulty communication and needs sensing, insufficient SEA staff to provide leadership or long-range regional planning, inequality of opportunities for children, etc. The established ESA has proven to be an effective unit in dissemination activities. Its utility in the RDx should be explored with SEA/ESA/RDx collaboration to develop the most feasible and cost-effective system of communication between R & D and the practitioner. Each unit has specific resources which will benefit the total system, e.g.:

Rx: leadership, general view of issues/needs, access to R & D products, potential regional dissemination skills

SEA: legal responsibility for education of its citizens-legislative mandates for local programs, leadership, some dissemination skills

ESA: close professional liaison with constituent LEA's, staff working directly with LEA's to determine needs and provide consultation, dissemination

activities in place which include internal/external information sharing processes, processes for validating and disseminating exemplary local products and processes, and the potential of maintaining self-sustaining dissemination systems to meet LEA needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for continuation and improvement of the RDx are not lacking. Contractors, consumers, involved NIE staff, communication "experts" and others have discussed the emerging system and made philosophical, operational, and technical suggestions concerning its potential value. Among the recommendations that appear to have relevance for the ESA are the following:

1. No nationwide single-agency system or configuration for dissemination shall be considered since no one system can adequately respond to all educational needs and channel/manage the required resources.
2. The professional community must support comprehensive R & D and evaluation studies about regionalism. Some areas of interest and needed evaluation are: a) the effectiveness of regional organizational models as communicative, integrative, and coordinating units; b) the quality of services and programs offered by ESA's compared to those of other agencies and levels of educational government; c) the cost-effectiveness of ESA's compared to other alternatives; d) development of appropriate linkages between ESA's and other governmental and private sector agencies; e) exploration of the ESA stake in R & D and as producers and synthesizers of knowledge.
3. The RDx configuration needs more client/user input at all levels of planning and management and stages

of development. This may lead to less requests for information and more requests for technical assistance. The unit in closest philosophical and geographic proximity to the client is probably best equipped to provide technical assistance.

4. The definition of ESA "linkers" and thier role in dissemination relative to SEA's and constituent LEA's is needed along with similar explanations of relationships between SEA staff (the primary target of the Rx) and Rx personnel. The SEA as the primary target may inhibit the ability of the RDx to determine the real needs of the educational practitioner.
5. The RDx as currently constituted cannot respond directly to educational practitioners. Some means of identifhing and training "linkers" at other levels or limiting clients to other providers of direct service to LEA's is needed.
6. The RDx should continue to build upon complementary or supportive activities with other agencies and networks. This will improve the image of resource sharing and simultaneously expand its capacity to respond to client needs.
7. The RDx should work with other agencies to develop processes for increasing the understanding and use

of R & D outcomes to reflect practioners' needs and improve their delivery of services.

8. The RDx should encourage the mounting of interdisciplinary approaches to the solution of complex educational problems. Temporary exchanges of personnel might be considered as one means of developing such an interdisciplinary approach.
9. Limitation of the RDx contractors to response in the two priority areas of basic skills and competency-based education should be examined. Information from and data collection about the system users seem warranted.
10. The RDx should remain flexible, continuing to monitor, redesign, and refine its activities in response to evaluation and feed forward information from its agreed-upon target audience(s). These audiences may not be the same for each Rx since education is a state responsibility and state systems vary. The SEA should continue to be an intermediary to appropriate sub state organizations.

APPENDIX A

MANDATED AND PERMISSIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

OF

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

IN MICHIGAN

APPENDIX A

MANDATED RESPONSIBILITIES
OF
INTERMEDIATE DISTRICTS

(Michigan Compiled Laws)

MCL Section	
340.3	Dissolve constituent districts
.70	Assign name and number of fourth class constituent districts
.106	Approve name change of third class constituent districts
.252b	Submit plan for special education; provide special education programs not provided by local districts
.294a	Conduct election of board members and fill vacancies
.296a	Elect board of education officers; select name of district and depository for funds; maintain coded accounts as required by superintendent of public instruction; submit to annual audit
.298a(1)(a)	Duties of board "as required by law and superintendent of public instruction, but shall not supersede nor replace the board of education of any constituent school district, nor shall it control or otherwise interfere with the rights of constituent districts except as provided in this chapter."
(b)	Employ superintendent and such deputies and assistants it deems necessary; fix compensation for same
(c)	Prepare annual budget and submit to constituent districts for approval; certify annual tax rate to appropriate officials
(d)	Compute delinquent school taxes due each district and notify districts of same
(e)	Prepare annually and file with superintendent of public instruction map of intermediate district
(g)	Furnish consultant or supervisory services on request of constituent district
(h)	Employ qualified teachers for special education programs constituent districts are unable or unwilling to provide

(i) Direct, supervise and conduct cooperative educational programs for constituent districts requesting same

340.298a(1)(j) Conduct co-op programs for two or more constituent districts when requested

(3) Appoint board of canvassers, in compliance with 340.514a to canvass results of intermediate district elections

c(1)(a) Submit plan for special education programs and services to state board of education

(f) Maintain a record of every resident handicapped person up to 25 years of age who has not completed a normal course of study

(g) Have right to place in appropriate program or service any handicapped person

(h) Investigate and report non-compliance of constituent districts with laws or plans regulating special education programs

.300a Superintendent of intermediate district shall execute and file with president of board surety bond of $10,000

.301a Superintendent of intermediate district shall:

(a) Put into practice educational policies of the state and the board

(b) Record in writing all employees and suspend employees for cause pending board consideration of suspension

(c) Supervise and direct work of employees

(In districts not employing superintendent):

(d) Recommend in writing all teachers

(e) Suspend any teacher for cause

(f) Classify and control promotion of pupils

(g) Supervise and direct work of teachers

(For all constituent districts):

(i) Examine and audit books of constituent district when so directed by superintendent of public instruction

(j)	Act as assistant conductor of institutes as superintendent of public instruction shall require
(k)	Receive all forms and communications sent by superintendent of public instruction; dispose of same as directed; make reports as required
(l)	Examine revenue budgets, notify district that fails to file, notify district of failure to qualify for state school aid
(m)	Make written reports to local boards of education regarding all matters of educational interest to the local districts
340.325a	Combine with other intermediate districts, if membership is below 5,000 and not providing special education or area vocational education-technical services
.402-414b	Submit consolidation requests to superintendent of public instruction and, if approved, initiate and supervise election on the question
.440-441	Compile list of non-operating districts; notify board members of such districts to annex to operating district
.446-449	Consider division of constituent districts upon request
.461-468	Consider transfer of territory upon request
.495	Fill by appointment vacancies of more than 20 days of constituent boards of education
.514a(3)	Appoint intermediate board of canvassers
.570	Report to superintendent of public instruction non-certified teachers in districts not employing superintendents
.616	Publish financial report
.733-744	Employ county attendance officer for districts under 3,000
.771a(b)	Be party to all contracts of constituent districts for special education services
.984	Employ personnel of constituent districts which have discontinued special education programs before additional personnel for intermediate district special education programs

24.32-33	Distribute Michigan Manual, laws, journals, documents, and reports to constituent districts as prescribed by secretary of state
125.1351	Comply in building facilities with requirements of Accessibility to Public Buildings by Physically Handicapped Act
133.5	By August 1 anually, file with Municipal Finance Commission list of constituent school districts with outstanding bonds, notes, purchase contracts or other obligations as of June 30
211.205(c)	Superintendent or representative serve as member of county tax allocation board
(h)	Appoint member of county tax allocation board from board of education members of one of three smallest constituent districts
257.305a	Provide school bus safety education course for bus drivers, if not provided by a state university
.316a	Record school bus drivers, with physician's certificate, employed by primary school districts
388.192	Make recommendations for loans to school districts from county fund
.720	In counties of more than 1,000,000 population, provide petitions for emergency reorganization
.1201	Receive certified membership reports from local districts
.1254	Furnish list of post office addresses of treasurers, presidents, and secretaries of constituent districts boards to county treasurer between August 20 and 30
.1263	Notify department of education of unqualified teachers, district employer and amount of salary paid
389.31	Forward request of local school districts to form community college district to state board of education, along with proposed tax rate
.32	Forward approval of state board of education to local district and designate date for election
.52	In cases of requests from intermediate districts to form community college district, intermediate district with highest valuation forwards state approval to other intermediate districts and designates date for election
397.302	In county of over 1,000,000 population, superintendent of intermediate district serve on county library board

PERMISSIVE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF
INTERMEDIATE DISTRICTS

(Michigan Compiled Laws)

MCL Section	
340.291b,c,d	Operate educational media centers
.294b-h	Submit question of electing intermediate district board of education members to electorate of constituent districts
.298a(1)(f)	Cause annual school census to be taken in constituent districts (per 340.941-948 which is permissive)
(k)	Establish and conduct schools for wards of juvenile court
(l)	Lease or purchase sites; build, lease, or rent facilities
(2)	Administer oaths for qualifying board members or other transactions
.298b	Borrow:
(a)	For temporary purposes up to amount voted by the board of electorate
(b)	Or issue bonds to finance sites, buildings, equipment or other facilities not to exceed 1/10 of 1% of state equalized valuation without a referendum
.298c	Sell, exchange, rent, lease property not needed
.298c(1)(b)	As provided in county plan for special education, operate programs for special education services under contract
(c)	Employ special education director and personnel
(e)	Lease, purchase or otherwise acquire vehicles, sites, buildings, and equipment
(i)	Operate special education programs or contract for delivery of program
.298d	Operate educational recreational programs
.298f	Provide economic benefits to its employees; grant sabbatical leaves to qualified employees

340.301a(h)	Receive institute fees
.302a	Reorganize by consolidation
.303a	Reorganize by annexation
.304a	Request superintendent of public instruction for authorization to make area study
.307a-324a	Special education programs - submit question of coming under provisions of these sections to electorate; prepare special education budget; submit special education millage proposal to electorate; issue bonds to finance facilities and equipment with approval of electorate
.330-330u	Operate area vocational education-technical programs; submit question of coming under provisions of these sections to electorate; prepare vocational education-technical budget; submit vocational education-technical millage proposal to electorate; issue bonds to finance facilities and equipment with approval of electorate
.330v-x	Disorganize, if composed of less than five constituent districts
.391(5)	Operate bi-lingual programs
.585b	Enter into contract with business and industrial firms to provide secondary vocational education programs
.587	Establish nursery school and day care programs
.914	Donate or sell books to city, township, or county libraries, except where county library has been established
.931-938	Teachers' Institute; collect annual fee and remit to superintendent of public instruction; request institute to be held in third or fourth class districts
.941-948	Initiate school census in constituent districts; receive and verify school census reports
123.381-384	Construct, maintain, and operate joint water supply and waste disposal systems
.952a-958b	Incorporate building authority for acquiring school facilities
257.220b	Establish driver safety school
388.393	Conduct alternative education programs for pregnant persons

388.531-533	Establish and operate adult education programs
388.1148	In cooperation with juvenile court, supervise alternative juvenile rehabilitation programs
.1153	Establish special education programs and services for trainable individuals
.1162	Receive reimbursement, if millage levied, for area vocational-technical education
.1173-1174	Receive allowance for transportation of handicapped
.1183	Receive allowance for operating educational media centers
.1184	Receive allowance for cooperative educational programming
389.11	Request approval from state board of education to form community college district
.51	Propose and designate special election date for community college districts composed of one or more intermediate districts
395.171	Establish and operate job upgrading programs